DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 271 EC 307 253

AUTHOR	Lovitt, Thomas C.
TITLE	Special Education: Common Questions--Common-Sense Answers.
ISBN	ISBN-1-57035-106-6
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	44p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Sopris West, 1140 Boston Ave., Longmont, CO 80501; Tel: 303-651-2829; Web site: http://www.sopriswest.com
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Environment; *Compliance (Legal); Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; *Disability Identification; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; Knowledge Base for Teaching; Mainstreaming; Prereferral Intervention; *Regular and Special Education Relationship; *Special Education; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This booklet answers common questions about special education and students with disabilities. It was developed in light of the movement toward inclusion, through which more students with disabilities (and students with more serious disabilities) are being assigned to general education classes. The 28 questions and answers are grouped into five chapters that address: (1) prereferral/identification; (2) legal issues; (3) delivery models; (4) classroom accommodations and adaptations; and (5) persons, places, and resources. Each question and answer also identifies one or more suggested resources. Questions consider topics such as: the process of identifying a student who may have a disability, the types of disability, the incidence of disabilities, causes of disabilities, major federal laws protecting students with disabilities, the meaning of "least restrictive environment," advantages of cooperative teaching, curriculum modifications, classroom accommodations, grading students with disabilities, communicating with parents, relevant organizations and agencies, and 22 relevant journals and books. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 431 271

Special Education

COMMON QUESTIONS— COMMON-SENSE ANSWERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Leutheuser

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

EC 307253

BY
Dr. Thomas C. Lovitt

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Special

COMMON

QUESTIONS—

COMMON-SENSE

ANSWERS

Education

BY
Dr. Thomas C. Lovitt

Copyright © 1997 by Dr. Thomas C. Lovitt

All rights reserved.

Edited by Raven Moore
Cover, text, and layout design by Sherri Rowe

No portion of this handbook, in whole or in part,
may be duplicated or reprinted by any means
without the express written permission
of Sopris West.

ISBN #1-57035-106-6

Printed in the United States of America

Published and Distributed by:

Sopris West

1140 Boston Avenue • Longmont, CO 80501 • (303) 651-2829
http://www.sopriswest.com

About the Author

Dr. Thomas C. Lovitt is a professor of special education at the University of Washington, Seattle. His primary objective is to assist teachers in including students with mild disabilities in general education classes. He has done extensive research in developing, implementing, and validating instructional techniques for classroom teachers and has written or co-written 40 books and 118 articles. He drives a 1985 Ford Thunderbird, lives with his wife in Kirkland, Washington, and has four children and five grandchildren. He doesn't ski, sail, or surf, but he reads contemporary English fiction, practices trumpet, and takes long walks.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Prereferral/Identification 3

Legal Issues 11

Delivery Models 17

Classroom Accommodations and Adaptations 23

Persons, Places, and Resources 31

Introduction

Many general education teachers have worked with students with disabilities in their classes and have managed fairly well. However, most of them had students with learning disabilities or with visual, hearing, or other physical difficulties which were relatively easy to accommodate. But now, with the movement toward inclusion, more students with disabilities (and students with more serious disabilities) are being assigned to general education classes. In addition, there are now many students in general education classes with attention deficit disorder, some of whom have been placed in special education while others have not.

Coupled with the fact that increasing numbers and types of disabilities are encountered by general education teachers, those teachers are now expected to take on more responsibility for the overall instruction and welfare of students with disabilities. General education teachers are asked to participate more actively in planning for these students, carrying out and evaluating those plans, and communicating the effects of those efforts to parents.

Just how much about special education and the instruction of individuals with disabilities should general education teachers know in order to effectively educate these students? I asked myself that question, then consulted with a number of educators to come up with a list of what I believed to be the most important questions about special

education and students with disabilities.

The net result is a publication that can serve as an introduction to the topic of special education: it will familiarize readers with the concepts involved, the terminology used, and the spirit of the law. This booklet is not intended as an in-depth, comprehensive resource; however, each question has at least one reference to consult for further information. These references have been carefully selected for their relevance to each specific topic.

Although this booklet's content was derived through a process directed by classroom teachers, the content itself is useful to many beyond this group. Parents, administrators, school support personnel, other education professionals, and community support personnel must also understand how special education impacts each (their) child.

It is my hope that those who read this booklet and perhaps tap into a few of the suggested resources will have a clearer understanding of the issues surrounding the education of students with disabilities, enabling them to feel more confident when dealing with these students and making them better able to direct these students toward prosperous lives.

Prereferral/Identification

Q 1

In its broadest sense, what is special education?

Special education is modified instruction designed to meet the needs of students with special learning needs. In order to receive special education services, a student must be identified as "disabled" under certain specific legal guidelines. Special education services are governed by specific federal and state legislation.

Although special education services are sometimes delivered in a specific place, it is crucial to understand that special education is not a place per se. "Special education" refers to a **range of services**, not the place(s) in which those services are delivered. The majority of students receiving special education services remain in the regular classroom for at least half of their school day; the services they receive depend upon their individual special learning needs. The goal of special education is the same as that of general education: to develop each student to his or her fullest potential.

• Resource •

Smith, D.D. & Luckasson, R. (1995). *Introduction to special education: Teaching in an age of challenge* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. See Chapter 1, "The Context of Special Education." [160 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02194-2315; (800) 852-8024; http://www.abacon.com]

Q 2

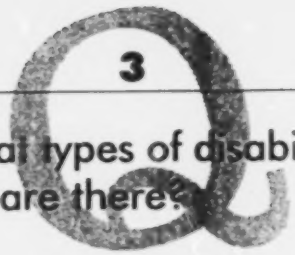
What should a teacher do if he or she believes that a student may have a disability and may be a candidate for special education services?

According to most states' guidelines, before a classroom teacher alerts someone in special education about a student who may have a disability, he or she is required to make a few procedural or instructional modifications. If, following those adjustments, the student is still a worry to the teacher, then the teacher might consult with other professionals. Many elementary and secondary schools have "prereferral teams," which commonly comprise four or five professionals. Such a team might include other classroom teachers, a special education or remedial instructor, a counselor or school psychologist, a principal or vice principal, or perhaps a communication disorders specialist.

One or more of the team members might observe the target student in his or her classroom and, with other team members, meet with the classroom teacher. At that meeting the team members may offer a number of ideas for working with the student. If the suggested techniques do not produce results, the classroom teacher would probably initiate a formal referral through special education.

• Resource •

Wood, J.W. (1992). *Adapting instruction for mainstreamed and at-risk students* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall. See the material in Chapter 2, "Assessing Students." [One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458; (201) 236-7000; http://www.smartpages.com/merrill]



3

What types of disabilities are there?

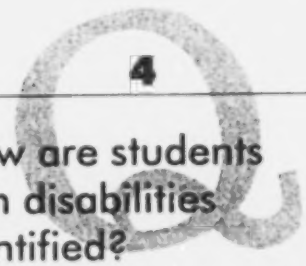
Although the categories and names of disabilities vary somewhat from one state to another, there are 12 categories identified by the federal government:

- Mental retardation
- Specific learning disabilities
- Serious emotional disturbances
- Speech or language impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Deaf-blindness
- Orthopedic impairments
- Other health impairments
- Multiple disabilities
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury

• Resource •

There is considerable information about the various types of disabilities in each state's Rules and Regulations.

U.S. Department of Education. (1995). *The seventeenth annual report to Congress on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Washington, DC: Author. [400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Washington, DC 20202-2564; (202) 205-5465; http://www.ed.gov/]



4

How are students with disabilities identified?

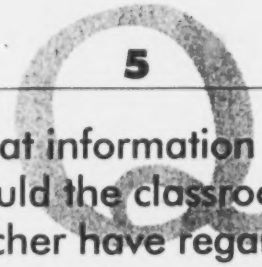
To be eligible to receive special education services, a student must meet the eligibility criteria for at least one of the categories (e.g., specific learning disabilities). Most students with disabilities are identified by age nine (fourth grade). In general, three types of assessments are given to determine eligibility:

- Scholastic (general intelligence, academic performance, communication)
- Physical (motor abilities, health, vision, and hearing)
- Adjustment (social-emotional functioning)

Based on a referral for special education evaluation from a classroom teacher, from other school personnel, or from a parent, assessments are conducted by a special education multidisciplinary team. This team may include a school psychologist, a communication disorders specialist, and/or a counselor, among other education professionals. They use approved instruments and procedures to evaluate the referred student's current levels of functioning in the areas outlined previously. This team shares the results of the assessments with the student's parent(s), then in collaboration with the parent(s) and the classroom teacher, the team determines whether the student in question has a disability that significantly impairs his or her school functioning and thereby qualifies him or her for special education services according to federal and state guidelines.

• Resource •

Heward, W.L. (1996). *Exceptional children: An introduction to special education* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall. See chapters pertaining to various disabilities (e.g., Chapter 5, "Students With Learning Disabilities").



5

What information should the classroom teacher have regarding a student with a disability prior to his or her coming into the class?

Ideally, the classroom teacher will have been an active participant in the multidisciplinary team IEP meeting that made the regular classroom placement decision. Due to time and personnel constraints, however, the regular classroom teacher's participation is not always possible. The classroom teacher should be informed of:

- Medications the students may be taking
- Medical problems that could interfere with his or her schooling (e.g., seizures, asthma attacks)
- Behavior problems that are recurring, and related interventions that have been successful
- Academic performance and instructional approaches that have been particularly successful
- The student's interests and any items or events that are reinforcing
- The level of support the teacher will be given to help meet the needs of a student with disabilities placed in his or her classroom

• Resource •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 2, "Planning and Providing Special Education Services."

6

How many individuals with disabilities are there, and what types of disabilities do they have?

There are about 5.1 million children with disabilities, or 7.4% of the resident population from birth to age 21. Of that number, 52.4% are children with specific learning disabilities, 22.2% have speech or language impairments, 10.9% are children with mental retardation, and 8.3% have serious emotional disturbances. These four categories account for 93.4% of the students served by special education. The remaining 6.6% of these students are distributed across the other eight disability categories, which are considered "low incidence" disabilities.

• Resource •

U.S. Department of Education, *op.cit.*

7

What causes some of these disabilities?

This is a complex question. Causes are rarely singular; there are generally many interrelated variables that result in a disability. Following are some of the general causes of disability:

- Genetic causes (e.g., Down syndrome)
- Metabolic causes (e.g., phenylketonuria, or PKU)
- Environmental factors (e.g., lead poisoning, fetal alcohol syndrome)
- Chronic illnesses (e.g., arthritis, diabetes)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Brain injury (e.g., asphyxia)
- Accidents (e.g., spinal cord injury)
- Congenital birth defects (e.g., spina bifida, cerebral palsy)

It is often difficult to determine causes of disabilities such as learning disability. Contributing factors may include heredity, environment, or a combination of the two. However, the important task is not to pinpoint the exact cause of the disability but rather to address the resulting condition.

• Resource •

Smith, D.D. & Luckasson, R., *op.cit.* See material in the various chapters on types of disability regarding causes, for example, Chapter 4, "Mental Retardation."

8

What is ADD (attention deficit disorder) or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), and is it a disability?

According to many authors, a student with ADD or ADHD is one who often:

- Fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork
- Has difficulty sustaining attention in work or play
- Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork
- Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Avoids or dislikes tasks that require sustained effort
- Loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- Easily becomes distracted by extraneous stimuli
- Forgets important daily activities

Following are a few recommendations for instructing these students:

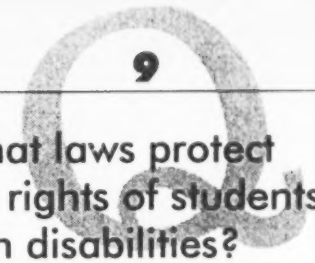
- Use token economies
- Develop contingency contracts
- Reduce stimulation as much as possible
- Set short-range goals
- Communicate often with the student about his or her attainment of goals

Some students with ADD/ADHD do receive special education services, having qualified in one of the disability categories, most often "other health impairments." The majority of students with ADD/ADHD, however, receive special services in general education classes as directed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (this is detailed in a following question).

• Resource •

Bender, W.N. & McLaughlin, P.J. (1994). *A.D.D. from A to Z: A comprehensive guide to attention deficit disorder.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West. [1140 Boston Avenue, Longmont, CO 80501; (303) 651-2829; http://www.sopriswest.com]

Legal Issues



9

What laws protect the rights of students with disabilities?

There have been many laws passed that were designed to protect individuals with disabilities. Laws to provide services to people with disabilities date back to the 1830s. The following five laws have had a major impact on the education of students with disabilities:

- **Rehabilitation Act of 1973** (PL 93-113)—This law stated, in part, "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 laid the foundation for later legislation protecting the educational rights of persons with disabilities.

- **Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975** (PL 94-142)—This law had more impact on education rights and equal protection for persons with disabilities than any other piece of legislation in the history of the nation. In essence, it stated that public schools would provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) with all services needed for an effective education

program in the least restrictive environment (see question #12). Before 1975, children with disabilities did not have the right to a free appropriate public education.

- **Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1986** (PL 99-457)—This law extended the protections of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 to infants and toddlers. Currently school districts throughout the United States are responsible for the education of all children with disabilities from the age of 3 to the age of 21. These amendments established a state grant program providing for early intervention with children from birth to age two with disabilities. Each state sets its own criteria for whom to serve under these amendments.

- **Education of the Handicapped Amendments of 1990** (PL 101-476)—This law was passed by Congress to amend the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Among other revisions, it provided that students be given school-to-work transition services no later than age 16, and earlier if appropriate.

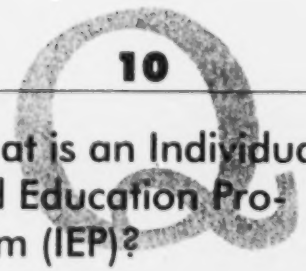
- **Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act of 1991** (IDEA) (PL 102-119)—Some of the key features of IDEA that distinguish it from the Education of All Handicapped Children Act are: (1) The definition of "children with disabilities" was expanded to include children with autism and children with traumatic brain injury, bringing the number of disability categories to 12; (2) The word "disabilities"

was substituted for the word "handicaps"; and (3) The setting in which special education services are delivered was further clarified. Although the term "inclusion" is not included in IDEA, current court cases have required schools to actually attempt regular education placements with support.

• Resources •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 1, "Keys to Special Education," for a summary of important laws and court cases.

Smith & Luckasson, *op. cit.* See Chapter 1, "The Context of Special Education."



10

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

Individualized Education Programs are mandated by law for each student who is receiving special education services. The IEP provides a written document that describes the student's present level of functioning; the planned goals and objectives for the student; the type and location of services to be provided; the extent to which the student will be in the regular classroom or other places with students without disabilities; the date special education services will commence; the expected duration of those services; and the procedures to be used to evaluate the student's progress. IDEA included an additional provision to the IEP: it must include a statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than age 16 (at a younger age, if appropriate). The IEP must be reviewed annually, and a formal reevaluation for

eligibility is required every three years.

• Resources •

Bateman, B.D. (1996). *Better IEPs: How to develop legally correct and educationally useful programs* (2nd ed.). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Smith & Luckasson, *op. cit.* See Chapter 3, "IFSP, IEP, ITP: Planning and Delivering Services."

Note: Public Law 102-119 (Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act) reauthorization hearings were in process in both the House and the Senate at the time of this handbook's publication in the winter of 1996. The reader should check the current legislation at the time of reading for specific details, particularly in the areas of these projected modifications to the bill:

- The scope of the IEP. It is believed that the scope of the IEP may be broadened, with language directing an IEP team to first focus on enhancing student's access to the general curriculum. Only after this goal has been met will the team address specific needs created by the handicapping condition.

- The current age at which transition planning becomes a mandatory part of the IEP. This age may be lowered from 16 (as indicated in this handbook) to 14.

- Measurable long-term (annual) goals. These may become a mandatory component of the IEP, rather than the current focus on short-term objectives. The short-term objectives will likely become optional.

- Term of reevaluation of the IEP. A likely modification to current language may be from a formal reevaluation every three years to requiring a

reevaluation only when the IEP team deems it necessary.

- Discipline of students with IEPs. Changes are currently proposed regarding the determination for when to take disciplinary action; the duration of suspensions; and the placement of students with disabilities during suspension or after expulsion.

11

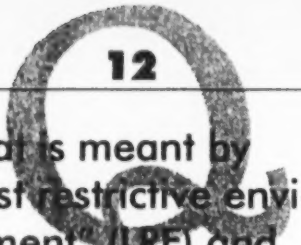
What roles should teachers, parents, and students play in the development and implementation of IEPs?

General education teachers should take an active role in setting goals for students with disabilities in their classes and in arranging other features of the IEP. Parents must be invited to any IEP team meeting. The team should strive to accommodate the parents' schedules when holding these meetings. Parents should participate fully in designing every component of the document, especially in setting goals. They should understand transition plans, required services of ancillary staff, and transportation issues. Parents should understand their right to contest or appeal any feature of their child's IEP. Students should also be actively involved in preparing and carrying out their plans. IDEA specifies that students must be invited to all IEP meetings having to do with transition planning.

• Resource •

Turnbull, A.P. & Turnbull, H.R. III. (1997). *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: A special partnership* (3rd ed.). Merrill/Prentice Hall. See Chapter 12, "Individualizing for Appropriate Education."

Delivery Models



12

What is meant by "least restrictive environment" (LRE) and how does this concept affect special education placement decisions?

Placement in the least restrictive environment is another right guaranteed by law to students with disabilities. The concept of least restrictive environment is often closely associated with the terms "mainstreaming" and "inclusion." The latter two terms hold a variety of meanings for different people, but are generally used to imply regular classroom placement for students with disabilities. These terms are not synonymous with least restrictive environment.

Placement in the least restrictive environment simply means that students with disabilities will be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate, and that students with disabilities will be removed from regular classrooms **only** when education in those situations with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot satisfactorily meet their special learning needs.

Traditionally, there has been a range of services available for serving students with disabilities, from special schools (most restrictive) to general education classes (least restrictive).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

• Resource •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 2, "Planning and Providing Special Education Services."

13

Where are students with disabilities educated?

Although most students with disabilities are now assigned to general education classes for most of the time, other locations for serving them are still available, such as resource rooms and self-contained classes. **Resource rooms** are designed to assist students for a part of the day in a few academic areas. **Self-contained classes** are generally set up to serve only students with disabilities, for the entire day. It is important to keep in mind that sometimes these may be the least restrictive environment in which to serve a particular student appropriately.

• Resource •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 2, "Planning and Providing Special Education Services."

14

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of including a student with a disability in general education classes?

Advantages:

- May hold the student to higher standards
- Allows the student to spend more time with students without disabilities
- Exposes the student to a wider range of school subjects

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Increases the student's confidence and self-esteem
- Helps peers to better understand individuals with disabilities

Disadvantages:

- Many general education teachers are not properly trained to teach students with disabilities
- Teacher expectations for the student may be too high
- The student may be teased
- General education programs may not be as individualized as special education programs

• Resource •

Fad, K. & Riddle, M. (1995). *Inclusion notes for busy teachers.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

15

What instructional approaches can a teacher use in the classroom to accommodate students with a wide range of learning needs?

Peer-mediated instructional approaches, in which students serve as instructional agents for other students, provide an excellent way to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. Two of the most widely used techniques are:

- Cooperative learning—Students work together in small groups toward shared goals; rewards are earned based

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

on the collective performance of the group.

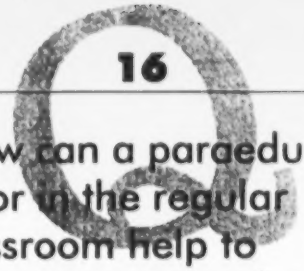
- Peer tutoring—Students are divided into teams and work in dyads while following prescribed instructional procedures.

• Resources •

Lovitt, T.C. (1991). *Preventing school dropouts: Tactics for at-risk, remedial, and mildly handicapped adolescents.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. See Chapter 2, "Social Behaviors," for details on setting up the peer-mediated approaches noted here and also for setting up other approaches. [8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, TX 78757-6897; (800) 397-7633; http://www.proedinc.com]

Lovitt, T., Fister, S., Freston, J., Kemp, K., Moore, R.C., and Schroeder, B.E. (1995). *Translating research into practice (TRIP): Learning strategies* (2nd ed.). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Lovitt, T., Fister, S., Freston, J., Kemp, K., Moore, R.C., and Schroeder, B. E. (1995). *Translating research into practice (TRIP): Teaching strategies* (2nd ed.). Longmont, CO: Sopris West.



16

How can a paraeducator in the regular classroom help to meet the needs of a student with a disability?

Following are a few specific roles for paraeducators:

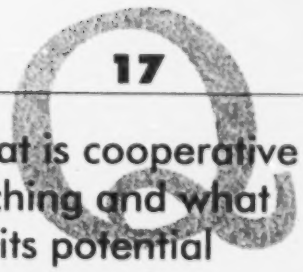
- Monitoring and assisting a student during teacher-directed, whole class instruction
- Monitoring and supporting a student during independent work or cooperative learning activities
- Providing follow-up instruction after teacher-directed instruction
- Providing small-group instruction (preteaching or alternative instruction) to a student

- Training others (peer partners, peer tutors, volunteers, parents) to provide instruction or assistance to a student

- Supporting a student's instructional program through the preparation of materials and the fulfillment of other clerical tasks.

• Resource •

Gerlach, K., Pickett, A.L., Vasa, S.F., & Steckelberg, A.L. (1992). *Strengthening the partnership: Paraeducators and teachers working together.* Bremerton, WA: Olympic Educational Service District #114. [105 National Avenue N., Bremerton, WA 98312; (360) 479-0993]



17

What is cooperative teaching and what are its potential advantages?

Cooperative teaching is a collaborative model in which both special and general education teachers have joint responsibility for designing, delivering, monitoring, and evaluating instruction for diverse learners in the regular classroom.

Administrators should encourage and support cooperative teaching units, but the teachers themselves should decide with whom to team up and how to structure the collaboration. One advantage of this method is that general education teachers will know a great deal about curriculum and group instruction, and special education teachers will know a considerable amount about study skills instruction, adapting materials, and classroom management.

• Resource •

Bauwens, J. & Hourcade, J.J. (1995). *Cooperative teaching: Rebuilding the schoolhouse for all students.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Classroom Accommodations and Adaptations

18

What are some common modifications of the curriculum to accommodate students with disabilities?

Specific accommodation activities will be discussed amongst the IEP team. Common strategies include such things as cooperative learning groups, study guides/graphic organizers, highlighted texts, peer tutoring, and so forth.

• Resource •

Cegelka, P.T. & Berdine, W.H. (1995). *Effective instruction for students with learning difficulties.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. See Chapter 5, "Managing Student Behavior," and Chapter 6, "Structuring the Classroom for Effective Instruction."

19

What are some general classroom accommodations that a teacher can make for students with physical disabilities?

The major accommodations necessary for these students are structural and equipment modifications and are the responsibility of the school district. Some accommodations a classroom teacher can make include:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

- Give the student a pad of paper to write on, rather than loose sheets
- Use tape or clipboards to secure loose papers
- Provide wider aisles in the classroom
- Elevate tables or desks on bricks to make room for wheelchairs

• Resource •

Smith & Luckasson, *op. cit.* See Chapter 11, "Physical Disabilities and Health Impairments."

20

What accommodations can be made for students with visual impairments in general education classes?

The major accommodations necessary for students with visual impairments will be visual aids and/or assistive technology and will be supplied to the student before he or she arrives in the classroom. Following are some simple accommodations that classroom teachers can make.

For students with visual impairments, encourage them to use their eyes as much as possible. Try some of the following accommodations:

- Select instructional materials according to effective use of color, contrast, type size and spacing, and page layout
- Use relief maps and globes, Braille atlases and rulers, and talking calculators
- Orient students to physical arrangement of classrooms and other areas of the school, and keep

them informed of any environmental changes

- Assign a guide to students with visual impairments for special events that occur outside the classrooms or school

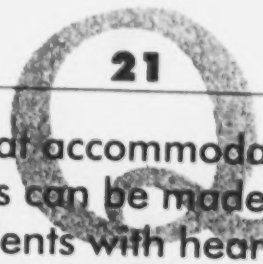
- Allow the student to position himself or herself near the chalkboard, overhead projector, or wherever instruction is taking place

- For safety, avoid leaving cabinets, storage bins, and classroom doors partially open

- Verbalize as much as possible when giving instructions and assignments

• Resource •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 9, "Students Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision."



21

What accommodations can be made for students with hearing impairments in general education classes?

The necessary assistive technology will be supplied to the student in advance, just as in the case of students with visual impairments. Following are some simple accommodations the classroom teacher can make.

For students with hearing impairments, avoid the temptation to abbreviate your communication. Accommodations the classroom teacher can make include:

- Check students' hearing aids daily to be sure they are functioning, and use amplification devices when possible

- Arrange for a note taker or interpreter when necessary
- Use an overhead projector to show important points in lectures
- Avoid moving around the room while speaking; face the student at all times when lecturing
- Provide nonverbal cues and use facial expressions, body movements, and gestures
- Shorten and simplify verbalizations
- Use visual aids such as pictures and diagrams
- Repeat main points of instruction
- Call speakers' names to help the student locate the source of the speech
- See that there is adequate illumination
- Reduce the distance between speaker and student as much as possible

• Resource •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 8, "Students Who Are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing."

22

What classroom management issues are important to keep in mind when working with students with disabilities?

Classroom management is often an issue in general education classes, and especially in classes which include students with disabilities. Common behavior problems exhibited by students with disabilities include talking out of turn,

being out of seat, not attending to the teacher, not completing work, and being disruptive.

Behavior management methods that are appropriate to use with a student with a disability may be different from those used with general education students. The classroom teacher should be aware of each student's IEP guidelines, the general school policy, and the current federal laws regarding such issues as discipline, suspension, and expulsion.

Students with disabilities may also benefit from direct instruction in key social skills, such as initiating a conversation, working cooperatively, accepting "No," and dealing with teasing.

• Resources •

Sprick, R.S. & Howard, L.M. (1995). *The teacher's encyclopedia of behavior management: 100 Problems/500 Plans.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Lovitt, *op.cit.* See Chapter 2, "Social Behaviors."

Jenson, W.R., Rhode, G., & Reavis, H.K. (1995). *The tough kid tool box.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

23

What are some ways to grade students with disabilities? What should be considered when deciding on one method or another?

Three common criteria for grading students with disabilities are achieving a set standard, attaining IEP objectives, or reaching a satisfactory level of effort, attitude, or gain. A classroom teacher may decide to use one of these approaches, a combination or variation, or some other means. When deciding on an approach for grading, the

teacher should consider which one will motivate the student to do his or her best work, will encourage him or her to stay in school, and will help him or her to develop important skills and abilities.

• Resource •

Wood, *op. cit.* See Chapter 12, "Alternative Grading Procedures."

24

What options are available for students with disabilities for graduating from high school?

Although the school dropout rate for students with disabilities is significantly higher than for the population at large, a disability does not preclude earning a high school diploma, or equivalent (as specified by the local district or state). Students with disabilities may graduate from high school at the same time as their age-mates or they may, depending upon whether they have fulfilled their IEP goals, graduate later, up to age 22. Their graduation requirements may be based on completing a required number of Carnegie Units (e.g., so many credits in science), achieving IEP or transition goals, or a combination of the two.

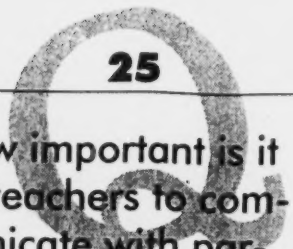
As mentioned previously, IEPs must include a statement of needed transition services beginning no later than age 16 and every year after that until the student exits school. The plan should be prepared by the student, his or her parents, and the teachers involved in carrying out the plan. These plans should promote the movement of the student from school to postschool living, which

includes postsecondary education; vocational education and training; integrated employment including supported employment; continuing and adult education; adult services; and independent living and/or community participation.

• Resource •

Goodlad, J.I. & Lovitt, T.C. (Eds.). (1993). *Integrating general and special education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall. See Chapter 1, "Access to Knowledge," and Chapter 11, "Retrospect and Prospect."

Persons, Places, and Resources



25

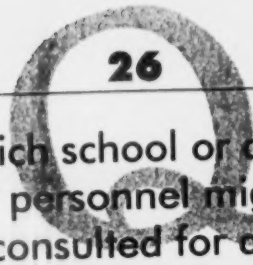
How important is it for teachers to communicate with parents of students with disabilities, and what are some ways to do this?

It is especially important to communicate regularly and candidly with parents of students with disabilities because many of these parents are weary of schools, teachers, and their children, yet many of them will have to care for their children into the children's adult lives.

There are many ways to communicate with parents: phone calls; FAX messages; email; letters; networking through other parents; notes sent home with their children; written notices or phone calls reminding parents of upcoming meetings; inviting parents to come to school for visits or to help out; and making home visits. Parents of students with disabilities most often want to know about how well their child is behaving, how well their child is attaining his or her goals, and how much their child has improved since the previous communication.

• Resource •

Turnbull & Turnbull, *op. cit.* See Chapter 9, "Communicating Among Reliable Allies."



26

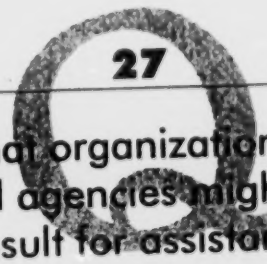
Which school or district personnel might be consulted for assistance with students with disabilities?

There are several professionals who are considered support personnel. Not every school building or every school district will employ all the personnel listed; however, some assistance will be available within any given school or district. Support personnel include:

- Special education teachers
- School psychologists
- Speech or language specialists
- Physical and occupational therapists
- Nurses
- Counselors
- ESL teachers; remedial reading and Title 1 teachers; vocational teachers and coordinators
- Social workers
- Audiologists
- Specialists for the hearing impaired or visually impaired

• Resource •

Heward, *op. cit.* See Chapter 2, "Planning and Providing Special Education Services."



27

What organizations and agencies might I consult for assistance?

Following are only a few of the important national organizations that can provide

information and resource material to educators, parents, and other interested parties:

- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf. Established in 1890 to empower persons who are hearing impaired to function independently by promoting universal rights and optimal opportunities to learn to use, maintain, and improve all aspects of their verbal communications, including their abilities to speak, speechread, use residual hearing, and process both spoken and written language. [3417 Volta Place N.W., Washington, DC 20007; Voice/TDD: (202) 237-5220; Phone (202) 337-5220; http://www.agbell.org]

- American Printing House for the Blind. The House's mission is to promote the independence of blind and visually impaired persons by providing special media, tools, and materials needed for education and life. [1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206-0085; Phone (800) 223-1839; http://www.aph.org]

- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. ASHA is the professional, scientific, and licensing association for more than 87,000 audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and speech, language, and hearing scientists. [10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852; Phone (301) 897-5700; http://www.asha.org/asha]

- American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR). AAMR is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization concerned with mental

retardation and related disabilities. More than 9,500 members in the U.S. and in 55 other countries have chosen AAMR as their association. [444 North Capitol Street N.W., Washington, DC 20001-1512; Phone (800) 424-3688; http://www.aamr.org]

- Association for Persons with Severe Disabilities. An international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates, and people who work in the disability field. They have 38 chapters and have members from 34 countries and territories. [29 West Susquehanna Avenue, Suite 210, Baltimore, MD 21204; Phone (410) 828-8274; http://www.tash.org]

- Association for Retarded Citizens. The ARC (formerly Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States) is the country's largest voluntary organization committed to the welfare of all children and adults with mental retardation and their families. [500 East Border Street, Suite 300, Arlington, TX 76011; Phone (817) 261-6003; http://www.thearc.org/welcome.html]

- Children With Attention Deficit Disorder (ChADD) Association. Through family support and advocacy, public and professional education, and encouragement of scientific research, the organization works to ensure that those with ADD are given the opportunity to reach their inherent potential. [499 Northwest 70th Avenue, Suite 101, Plantation, FL 33317; Phone (800) 233-4050; http://www.chadd.org]

- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The worldwide mission of the Council is to improve educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities. [1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589; Phone (703) 620-3660; http://www.cec.sped.org]

- Learning Disabilities Association of America. This is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to advance the education and general welfare of children and adults of normal or potentially normal intelligence who manifest handicaps of a perceptual, conceptual, or coordinative nature. [4156 Library Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1349; Phone (412) 341-1515; http://www.ldanatl.org]

- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities. This is an information and referral center that provides free information on disabilities and disability-related issues. [P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013-1492; Phone (800) 695-0285; http://www.aed.org.nichcy]

The following agencies can be found in most communities. Specific names may vary; consult local phone listings for phone numbers and addresses:

- County Department of Social Services

- County Mental Health Department

- County Employment and Training Center

- Office of Juvenile Justice

- Centers for people with developmental disabilities

- Educational service districts/regions
- State rehabilitation centers
- State Talking Book Library

28

What are some journals and books to which I can refer for additional information and assistance?

Journals:

- *American Journal on Mental Retardation*. Published bimonthly by the American Association on Mental Retardation, 1719 Kalorama Road N.W., Washington, DC 20009. Publishes empirical studies, reviews of research, and theoretical articles dealing with the behavioral, social, and biological aspects of mental retardation.
- *Education & Treatment of Children*. Published by Pro-Ed, 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, TX 78758-6897. A quarterly journal devoted to the dissemination of information concerning the development and improvement of services for children and youth. Includes original research, reviews of literature, and descriptions of innovative intervention and treatment programs.
- *Exceptional Children*. Published six times per year by the Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091-1589. The official journal of the Council for

Exceptional Children. Publishes original research, debates, and reviews of literature related to contemporary issues concerning the education of exceptional children. Designed to assist all professionals who work with exceptional children, including school psychologists, counselors, and administrators.

- *Exceptional Parent.* Published six times per year by the Psy-Ed Corporation, P.O. Box 3000, Dept. EP, Denville, NJ 07834. Provides practical information and emotional support to mothers and fathers of children with disabilities. Contains articles for parents and professionals on subjects such as improving parent-professional relationships, maintaining family relationships, and managing financial resources.

- *Intervention in School and Clinic.* Published five times per year by Pro-Ed. An interdisciplinary journal directed to teachers, parents, educational therapists, and specialists in all fields who deal with the day-to-day aspects of special and remedial education.

- *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis.* Published quarterly by the Society for the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Department of Human Development, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045. Publishes original experimental studies demonstrating improvement of socially significant behaviors.

- *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe*

Disabilities. Published quarterly by the Association for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 29 West Susquehanna Avenue, Suite 210, Baltimore, MD 21204. Publishes articles reporting original research, reviews of literature, and conceptual papers that offer new directions for service delivery, program development, effective assessment, and intervention methodologies.

- *Journal of Learning Disabilities*. Published ten times per year by Pro-Ed. Publishes research and theoretical articles relating to learning disabilities.

- *Journal of Special Education*. Published by Pro-Ed. A quarterly journal that publishes articles from all disciplines; deals with research, theory, opinion, and reviews of literature in special education.

- *Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders*. Published quarterly by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852. Includes articles dealing with the nature, assessment, and treatment of communication disorders.

- *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*. Published ten times per year by the American Foundation for the Blind, 15 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011. An interdisciplinary journal for practitioners and researchers concerned with the education and rehabilitation of children or adults who are blind or have visual impairments. Includes regular updates on

technological and legislative developments.

- *Rehabilitation Literature.* Published monthly by the National Easter Seal Society, 20223 West Ogden Avenue, Chicago, IL 60612. An interdisciplinary publication containing abstracts of current research and practice, with an emphasis on children and adults with orthopedic, neurological, and other physical and health-related impairments.

- *Remedial and Special Education.* Published six times per year by Pro-Ed. Devoted to discussing issues involving the education of persons for whom typical instruction is not effective. Emphasizes interpretation of research literature and recommendations for the practice of remedial and special education.

- *The Volta Review.* Published nine times per year by the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf, 3417 Volta Place N.W., Washington, DC 20007. Encourages the teaching of speech, speechreading, and use of residual hearing to deaf persons.

Books:

- Allen, K.E. & Schwartz, I.S. (1996). *The exceptional child: Inclusion in early childhood education* (3rd ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar. [3 Columbia Circle, Box 15015, Albany, NY 12212-5015; Phone (800) 347-7707; http://www.delmar.com/delmar.html]

- Barraga, N.C. & Erin, J.N. (1992). *Visual handicaps and learning* (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

- Bigge, J.L. (1991). *Teaching individuals with*

physical and multiple disabilities (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

- Blatt, B. (1987). *The conquest of mental retardation.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

- Kauffman, J.M. (1993). *Characteristics of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and youth* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

- Lovitt, T.C. (1995). *Tactics for teaching* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

- McCormick, L., Loeb, D.F., & Schiefelbusch, R.L. (1997). *Supporting children with communication difficulties in inclusive settings: School-based language intervention.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

- Mercer, C.D. (1997). *Students with learning disabilities* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Special Education:
Common Questions—Common-Sense Answers

FAPE, IEP, LRE, ED, LD . . .

Special education may seem like a jumble of laws, acronyms, and cliches. *Special Education: Common Questions—Common-Sense Answers* will help to cut through those "mysteries" and will provide down-to-earth responses to important and often perplexing questions.

This handy little book answers questions about:

- **Prereferral** (What should a teacher do if he or she believes that a student may have a disability and may be a candidate for special education services?)
- **Identification** (What types of disabilities are there?)
- **Legal issues** (What roles should teachers, parents, and students play in the development and implementation of IEPs?)
- **Special education delivery models** (What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of including a student with a disability in general education classes?)
- **Classroom accommodations** (What classroom management issues are important to keep in mind when working with students with disabilities?)
- **Resources** (Which school or district personnel might be consulted for assistance with students with disabilities?)

Sopris West

BEST COPY AVAILABLE